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The Red Hand in New York Schools

By ROSALIE M. GORDON

Rosalie M. Gordon has had a long and varied career in political, economic, and sociological research. She has served for more than 25 years as research associate for the well-known American writer and commentator, John T. Flynn.

Her interest in the field of education began more than twenty years ago when she served as assistant to Mr. Flynn in his post on the Board of Higher Education in New York City. As this Board is charged with the administration of four large colleges having the greatest student enrollment in America, her nine years' association with the Board and its work has given her a comprehensive perception of the problems and needs of both students and teachers at the college level.

She has also made an extensive study of education at the elementary and high school levels. This research, coupled with her close association with youngsters of school age in her own family and community, has resulted in her recent pamphlet "What's Happened to Our Schools?", showing up the socialist invasion of our public school system via progressive education.

At present Miss Gordon, in addition to assisting Mr. Flynn in the preparation of his weekly Mutual Broadcasting System commentary, "Behind the Headlines", is editor of ALL-AMERICAN BOOKS, a quarterly review journal of pro-American books, and the ALL-AMERICAN BOOK DIGEST, which contains condensations of important pro-American books.

American communists and their dupes operate on a cardinal axiom: Where there is no problem, make one! They are well aware of the fact that the chains of collectivism cannot be bound around a free people unless they are first torn by dissension, hatred, intolerance and fear.

The people of the City of New York are now being presented with a perfect example of this technique of creating a problem where none has existed. The leftist groups have chosen as their strategic weapon the touchy subject of integration and as their field of battle, the public schools.

The forces of dissension, having wrought havoc in the South, have now turned their attention to the North. In the South, of course, a problem did

and does exist—one that was greatly intensified when a packed Supreme Court, arrogating to itself unconstitutional law-making powers, stepped into the picture to compound the work of the trouble-makers. But in the North—and particularly in New York City—there was no problem. The schools of New York City have always been integrated. It never occurred to a citizen of New York that the school to which he sent his children should not also be attended by the children of Negro parents living in the same neighborhood or school district. School attendance was not bound by considerations of race, creed or nationality. The boundaries, rightly, were those of geography and convenience. Naturally, due to the normal congregation of like-minded people in certain areas in a city as large as New

York, this led to some schools having a predominantly white or a predominantly Negro population. It also led to some schools having a predominantly Irish or Italian or German or Chinese (as in New York's Chinatown) population, but no one has yet suggested that these must be reshuffled.

But, so far as the racial issue is concerned, the schools of New York always have been integrated—even in the extreme meaning of the term as applied by the Supreme Court. There was, therefore, no problem. But if there was no problem, how could the people of New York—black and white alike—be made conscious of their differences? How could the seeds of dissension be sown. How better than by creating a problem?

ON February 28 last, the Board of Education of New York City adopted a revolutionary program that could well sound the death-knell of the good race relations which have existed in New York for a long time. The program embodies a "master plan" for the willy-nilly shifting about of the school population of New York. As we have said, there never has been segregation in the New York City schools. But this new master plan contemplates an "integration" of Negro and Puerto Rican pupils with white pupils which goes far beyond even the radical interpretation of integration given by the Supreme Court.

The two most important features of the program are known as the "re-zoning plan" and the "teacher rotation plan." The school districts of New York, in the elementary grades, have been formed in order to provide school facilities for children on a neighborhood basis, so that young children would not have to walk or ride too far to school. The high schools, though having an older student population able better to cope with the complicated transportation facilities of a large city, still have been placed generally in more or less strategic neighborhoods to cut to a minimum the travelling time of students.

Under the rezoning plan, all this will go by the board. School districts will be rezoned without regard to geography or convenience. The only criterion will be so-called "integration." In other words, if there is a school in a district where the student population is predominantly white, the district will be extended or enlarged so as to force some students in a predominantly Negro school to attend the predominantly white school. And if there is a school in a predominantly Negro neighborhood, that district too will be extended or enlarged

so as to force white students to go to the predominantly Negro school.

Obviously, there are areas where this rezoning will be impossible, especially in the larger boroughs where the district lines would be so great as to become ridiculous. In that case, in the words of the plan: "Special methods for integration may be used, such as permissive zoning, selective bus transportation or change of school." In plain English, what that means is that Mr. and Mrs. John Smith, who bought a house in a neighborhood convenient to a public school for their Mary and Tommy, may very soon find Mary and Tommy being hauled by bus to another school in another neighborhood with a predominantly Negro or Puerto Rican population. And the same thing will apply to a self-respecting Negro or Puerto Rican family who moved into a neighborhood where their children could go to a school in which they would feel congenial and at home. They may suddenly find their youngsters being transported by bus to another school with a predominantly white population.

THIS, of course, is not an honest attempt to bring about integration, since New York has always had actual integration. School integration means this, and nothing else: That children of school age shall attend their neighborhood schools regardless of race or creed or color. The new plan rejects that completely. It proceeds on the theory that if there are few or no colored children in a school district, then by law a sufficient number of colored children will be literally kidnapped and forced into distant schools. The same treatment will be meted out to white children regardless of the inconvenience to children and parents. This is a clear rejection of a long standing principle of New York's public schools, namely that all children will be looked upon without reference to their color and will be treated—white and colored—alike.

It will be seen immediately that this plan, put forth presumably to end a non-existent discrimination in New York City schools, actually contemplates a form of discrimination almost beyond belief. One of the organizations opposing the plan puts its finger very accurately on this point. It said: "Who has the right to decide on which students will travel where? Shall we set up a committee which shall say which children go to what schools? Up to the present we have not been subjected to discriminatory practices of this kind in New York City; why shall we be now?"

Why, indeed? Why else but to plant among the people of New York the seeds of race consciousness, of discrimination; to set pupil against pupil and parent against parent, depending on whose child is to be sacrificed on the spurious altar of "racial balance."

Even without formal approval, the Board of Education, under pressure from certain groups to which we will come in a moment, has already instituted this plan in selected areas. One assistant superintendent, himself no foe of integration, put very succinctly what this program means. As reported by *U. S. News and World Report*, he said:

"The very act of consciously trying to mix races results in a form of 'segregated' thinking. It used to be that when a child came to me for assignment to a school, I never even thought about his color. I simply sent him to the nearest school that had room and the proper program for him. But now I have to consider that child's color—become conscious of his race—and try to assign him in a way that contributes to racial balance."

THE other part of the design—the teacher-rotation plan—involves pretty much the same thing. Teachers who have spent much time and energy studying the needs and guidance problems of pupils in their own schools will be forced to transfer to other schools in strange and distant neighborhoods. Aside from the travelling time imposed on already overburdened teachers, promotion will no longer depend solely on merit and length of service. It will depend on a teacher spending at least three years in a so-called "difficult" school. There is a contradiction here of which the promoters of the plan do not seem to be conscious. The rezoning and shifting about of pupils is supposed to make for sweetness and light and no more special difficulties in all the schools of New York. Yet some of the teachers are to be forced to do a tour of duty in schools with "difficult problems" supposedly eliminated by the rezoning plan!

THE question naturally arises: Who put this plan over—a plan guaranteed to generate race-consciousness and subsequent racial dissension among the people of New York? There is, of course, no implication that the members of the Board of Education or some of the civic groups backing the plan are communist, communist-dominated or even sympathetic to communist or leftist aims. But it is always possible for the leftist groups to get perfectly well-meaning people unknowingly

to do their dirty work for them. This is singularly true in the case of a delicate subject like integration, since no New Yorker wishes to be branded a segregationist. Therefore opposition to such a plan is difficult, since those opposed to it are immediately smeared as "racists," "intolerants," "Negro-haters," etc.

The NAACP—National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—ever since the Supreme Court decision in the Southern segregation cases—has been needling the public officials of New York to force such race-conscious "integration" as is embodied in this plan. The NAACP presumes, with no authority whatever, to speak for all the colored citizens of America, just as the Anti-Defamation League which cooperates closely with the NAACP, presumes to speak for all the Jewish citizens of America. The NAACP has always denied vehemently that it is communist or communist-dominated. That may be. But the records of the House Committee on Un-American Activities reveal communist, communist-front, fellow-travelling or subversive organizations or activities on the part of the president, chairman of the board, honorary chairman, 11 of 28 vice-presidents, 28 of 47 directors and a number of other officials of the NAACP. In fact, one of its founders—its only Negro founder incidentally—and a leading light is W. E. B. DuBois, who has a communist-front record covering eight single-spaced typewritten pages. Though President Eisenhower has seen fit to send greetings to the NAACP, his State Department is unable to issue a passport to DuBois because of his unsavory record.

In any case, following the needling from the NAACP, and a blast about "segregation" in New York from a psychology professor at City College, a study was conducted, presumably at the request of the then president of the Board of Education, by the Public Education Association which shares a floor with the NAACP in the misnamed "Freedom House" on West Fortieth Street. The PEA, of course, is not communist, but its bias can be gleaned from the fact that it is plugging for federal aid to education. One of its trustees is Dr. Ernest O. Melby, former dean of NYU's School of Education, who once served as a vice-chairman of the Committee on Education of the National Council of American Soviet Friendship, a blatant communist-front.

The PEA study, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Rose Shapiro, was conducted by NYU's Center for

Human Relations with a grant from the PEA—and from Robert Hutchins's Fund for the Republic, the foundation which, with Henry Ford's money, busily denounces congressional investigations of subversives and makes grants to a public library which refuses to get rid of a communist librarian.

Following the presentation of the PEA report to the Board of Education, the Board named a Commission on Integration to formulate a plan for adoption by the Board. It was made up of members of the Board itself, one or two associate superintendents of schools, a city or state official or two and representatives of selected civic groups. But who should turn up as chairman of the zoning commission report—the report recommending re-districting of schools and bus transportation of children to other schools on a race-conscious basis—but the same Mrs. Rose Shapiro who headed the Public Education Association's study financed by the Fund for the Republic.

This is the genesis of the revolutionary plan adopted by the Board of Education in February over the protests of High School Teachers Association, the Joint Committee of Teachers Organizations, the Queens Federation of Parents Clubs and many others. There were widespread charges of "railroading" in the rapid adoption of the plan, which is to go into effect this coming September and be in full operation by 1959. The High School Teachers Association, for instance, declares that neither it, the high school staffs, supervisors, nor the parents represented by the High School Parents Council were consulted or invited to hearings, de-

spite the Commission's statement that all interested people were invited to be heard.

AND so the forces of dissension, working through innocent and well-meaning "do-gooders", have managed to inject among the people of New York the seeds of racial consciousness and racial discord. If they succeed in New York's public schools, their next targets will be the public schools of other cities and towns. Then next on the list will come the religious and private schools, for the forces of dissension never cease in their evil work. And nobody is happier about the whole thing than the Communist *Daily Worker*, which devoted a front-page story to the adoption of the plan by the Board of Education, and a glowing editorial entitled "A Program To Fight For."

Council Letter No. 403 will naturally be of primary interest to residents of Greater New York. We are reliably told that if the integration measure about which Miss Gordon writes is adopted, the additional cost to New York taxpayers will be about \$2 million and ultimately the cost may run as high as \$5 to \$10 million.

We urge New York City citizens who are interested to write to the President of the Board of Education, Charles H. Silver, 110 Livingston Street, Brooklyn 1, N. Y., or to the Secretary, Board of Estimate, 1356 Municipal Building, New York 7, N. Y.

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